GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3640
ANSWERED ON:16.04.2002
SEMINAR OF PANCHAYAT PRESIDENTS
A. VENKATESH NAIK;C. SREENIVAASAN;RAMSHETH THAKUR

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have conducted any seminar of Panchayat presidents recently to discuss the matter of development of rural villages;

(b) if so, the details in this regard and the outcome of the seminar;

(c) whether the Government have taken the initiative to the process of transfer of funds and power to panchayats;

(d) whether any task force has been constituted for this purpose;

(e) if so, whether the task force has submitted its report; and

(f) if so, the salient features of the report?

Answer

MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU)

(a) to (f): An All India Panchayat Adhyakshas Sammelan was held at New Delhi on 5th and 6th April, 2002 to discuss issues in respect of revitalizing and strengthening of the Panchayati Raj System in the country. The Sammelan adopted a National Declaration indicating, inter-alia, that States and Union Territories would take necessary measures to ensure regular and timely Panchayat elections, to devolve funds, functions and functionaries in a time-bound manner, to constitute District Planning Committees and make them functional and to strengthen the Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats.

2. Article 243-G of the Constitution empowers the State Legislatures to devolvepowers upon Panchayati Raj Institutions. So far, the States have devolved powers upon Panchayats in varying degrees. The Central Government have been urging the States and Union Territories in this behalf, including through high-level discussions. A Conference of Ministers of Panchayati Raj of the States was held at New Delhi in July, 2001 when it was, inter-alia, resolved that powers would be devolved upon Panchayats in respect of the 29 Subjects listed in the 11th Schedule to the Constitution and instructions issued devolving specific executive powers upon each tier of Panchayats.

3. The salient features of the Report of the Task Force (constituted in July, 2001) include desegregation of each of the 29 Subjects into activities/tasks to be performed by different tiers, enhancement of the financial resources of Panchayats, provision by the State Governments of `untied` grants to enable the Panchayats to utilize the same in conformity with local needs and priorities, mandatory Social Audit by the Gram Sabhas and availability of qualified/ trained personnel, at various levels, to assist the Panchayati Raj Institutions in day-to-day working.